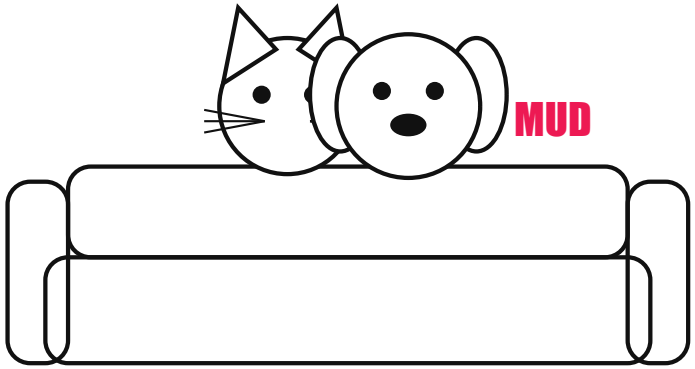
SIDECHAIN, EXPLAINED BY A CAT

The cat is the KICK. The dog is the BASS. There is one sofa (the low end). Only one of them fits.

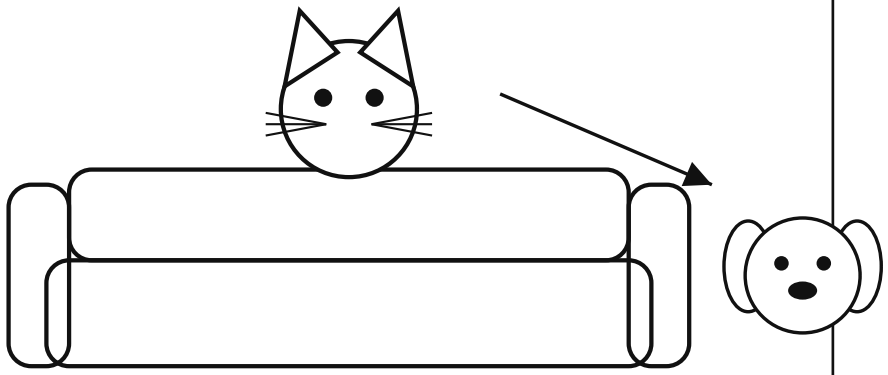
WITHOUT SIDECHAIN

Both on the sofa at once. Nobody is comfortable. That's mud.

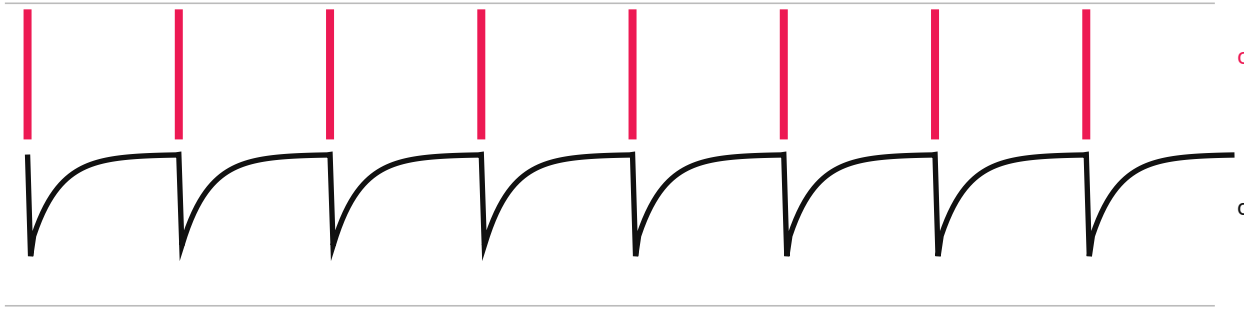


WITH SIDECHAIN

The cat jumps on, the dog politely steps off. The cat leaves, the dog comes back.



WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE



THE KNOBS, IN CAT

Threshold
How loud the cat has to land before the dog notices.

Ratio
How far the dog moves. 2:1 = scoots over. 100:1 = leaves the room.

Attack
How fast the dog reacts. Too slow = the cat lands on the dog.

Release
How long until the dog comes back. Set it so the dog is back before the next cat.

Ghost kick
The cat isn't there, but the dog still moves. Spooky. Very useful.

How to do it: put a compressor on the bass, set its sidechain input to the kick, threshold down until the bass dips about 3–6 dB on every kick, release so it's back before the next one. Congratulations, your cat and dog now live in peace.